



# Public Notice Tier 1 Templates

## Total Coliform Rule

### Coliform or *E. coli* Template 1-4

Instructions: (template on following page)

Since exceeding the fecal coliform or *E. coli* maximum contaminant level is a Tier 1 violation, you must provide public notice to persons served as soon as practical but within 24 hours after you learn of the violation (310 CMR 22.16(2)(b)). During this time, you must also contact your regional MassDEP office. You should also coordinate with your local board of health or health department. You may also have to modify the template if you also have high nitrate levels or other coliform MCL violations.

Mandatory language on health effects (310 CMR 22.16(5)(d)) for your public notification (PN), which must be included exactly as written, is presented in *italics* in the template.

You must also include the following italicized language in all notices, where applicable. Use of this language does *not* relieve you of your obligation to take steps reasonably calculated to notify all persons served:

*Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.*

**Delivery** - You must use one or more of the following methods to deliver the notice to consumers (310 CMR 22.16(2)(c)):

- Radio
- Television
- Hand or direct delivery
- Posting in conspicuous locations
- In addition to one (or more) of the above methods, you must publish the Tier 1 public notice within your local newspaper as a one-day advertisement no later than 14 days after the violation. A copy must be submitted to MassDEP no later than the time published.

You may need to use additional methods (e.g., newspaper, reverse 911 phone calls, e-mail, web posting, delivery of multiple copies to hospitals, clinics, or apartment buildings) since notice must be provided in a manner reasonably calculated to reach all persons served. If you post or hand-deliver, print your notice on your system's letterhead, if you have it.

The template is appropriate for hand delivery or a newspaper notice. However, you may wish to modify it before using it for a radio or TV notice. If you do, you must still include all required elements and leave the health effects language in *italics* unchanged. This language is mandatory (310 CMR 22.16(5)(d)). See Chapter 5 of EPA's *Public Notification Handbook* for notice suggestions.

**Alternative Sources of Water** – If you are selling or providing bottled water, your notice should say where it can be obtained. Remember that bottled water can also be

Massachusetts Department of  
Environmental Protection  
One Winter Street  
Boston, MA 02108-4746

Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
Charles D. Baker, Governor  
Karyn E. Polito, Lt. Governor

Executive Office of  
Environmental Affairs  
Matthew A. Beaton, Secretary

Department of  
Environmental Protection  
Martin Suuberg, Commissioner

Produced by the  
Bureau of Water Resources,  
Rev. December 2016.

This information is available in  
alternate format by calling our  
ADA Coordinator at  
617-556-1139.

contaminated. If you are providing bottled water, make sure it meets the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standards. You can contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the bottler and ask for the most recent test results.

**Population Served** - Make sure it is clear who is served by your water system--you may need to list the areas you serve.

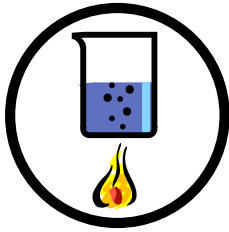
**Corrective Action** - In your notice, describe corrective actions you are taking. Listed below are some steps commonly taken by water systems with fecal coliform or *E. coli* violations. Use one or more of the following actions, if appropriate, or develop your own:

- We are chlorinating and flushing the water system.
- We are switching to an alternate drinking water source.
- We are increasing sampling for coliform bacteria to determine the source of the contamination.
- We are repairing the wellhead seal.
- We are repairing the storage tank.
- We are restricting water intake from the river/lake/reservoir to prevent additional bacteria from entering the water system and restricting water use to emergencies.

**After Issuing the Notice** - Send a copy of each type of notice and a certification that you have met all the public notice requirements to your regional MassDEP office and local board of health within ten days from the time you issue the notice (310 CMR 22.15(3)(b)).

It is recommended that you notify health professionals in the area of the violation. People may call their doctors with questions about how the violation may affect their health, and the doctors should have the information they need to respond appropriately. In addition, health professionals, including dentists, use tap water during their procedures and need to know of contamination so they can use bottled water. It is a good idea to issue a "problem corrected notice" when the violation is resolved. See Template 1-6.

**Note** - The EPA Public Notification Handbook provides additional aids to help water systems develop notices for violation situations. An electronic copy of the Public Notification Handbook is available at EPA's web site at: <https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=P1006ROA.txt> . Please note that the handbook templates are non-state specific so Massachusetts water suppliers are required to use the Massachusetts version of the templates for compliance purposes. Electronic copies of the Massachusetts public notification templates are available on the MassDEP website <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/water-systems-ops.html#23> .



## DRINKING WATER WARNING

[System] water is contaminated  
with [coliform] or [*E. coli*]

### BOIL YOUR WATER BEFORE USING

[Coliform or *E. coli*] bacteria were found in the water supply on [date]. These bacteria can make you sick, and are a particular concern for people with weakened immune systems. Bacterial contamination can occur when increased run-off enters the drinking water source (for example, following heavy rains). It can also happen due to a break in the distribution system (pipes) or a failure in the water treatment process.

#### What should I do? What does this mean?

- **DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT BOILING IT FIRST or USE BOTTLED WATER**

Bring all water to a rolling boil and let it **boil for at least one (1) minute** or **use bottled water**. You may cool the boiled water before using. Boiled or bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, food preparation, brushing teeth and washing dishes **until further notice**. Boiling kills bacteria and other organisms in the water.

- Refer to the attached notice for additional precautions you may take. This information is also located on the MassDEP website: **Consumer Information on Boil Orders** <http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/drinking/boilordr.htm>  
**Boil Order Frequently Asked Questions** <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/boil-water-order-faq.html>
- **Discard** all ice, beverages, uncooked foods, and formula made with tap water collected on or before [date of concern/positive sample].
- **Food establishments** must follow MA DPH procedures and the direction of their local board of health, which may be more stringent than the DPH guide. **MA Department of Public Health - Guidance for Emergency Action Planning for Retail Food Establishments (pg. 19)** <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/environmental/foodsafety/emergency-action-plans.pdf>.
- *Fecal coliforms and E. coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a special health risk for infants, young children, some of the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems.*
- The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice. People at increased risk should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers.

#### What is being done?

[Describe corrective action.] We will inform you when tests show no bacteria and you no longer need to boil your water. We anticipate resolving the problem within [estimated time frame].

For more information, please contact [name of contact] at [phone number] or [mailing address]. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

*Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.*

This notice is being sent to you by [system].

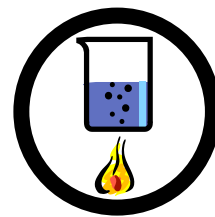
PWS ID#: [xxxxxxx]

Date distributed: [date]



## Drinking Water Contaminated with Bacteria

Recent tests have indicated the presence of bacteria in your drinking water. The following are precautions you can take:



### Drinking the Water

There are two simple and effective methods you can use to treat drinking water for microbiological contaminants (bacteria):

**1. Boiling:** Bring the water to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute. Laboratory data show this is adequate to make the water safe for drinking. You may cool the water before using it.

or

**2. Disinfecting:** Disinfectant tablets obtained from a wilderness store or pharmacy may be used. In an emergency, liquid chlorine bleach such as Clorox® or Purex® can be used at a dose of 8 drops (or 1 teaspoon) of bleach to each gallon of water. (*Careful measurement with a clean dropper or other accurate measuring device is required when using liquid chlorine bleach.*) Let stand for at least 30 minutes before use. Read the label to see that the bleach has 5-6% available chlorine.

### Washing Dishes

It is best to use disposable tableware during the time the water needs disinfection. If that is not possible, the following steps should be taken:

1. Wash dishes normally but be sure to rinse them in a solution of 1 teaspoon of bleach, as mentioned above, in a gallon of warm water (submersion in a dishpan for a minimum of 5 minutes is advised). The dishes should be allowed to air dry. Gloves should be worn when handling bleach to minimize any skin irritation.
2. Because of the many variables involved with dishes washed in a dishwasher, it is recommended that you use the additional rinse step, as described above, after washing.

**Bathing:** Young children should be given sponge baths rather than put in a bathtub where they might ingest the tap water. Adults or children should take care not to swallow water when showering.

**Brushing your teeth:** Only disinfected *or* boiled water should be used for brushing your teeth.

**Ice:** Ice cubes are not safe unless made with disinfected *or* boiled water. The freezing process does not kill the bacteria or other microorganisms.

**Washing fruit and vegetables:** Use only disinfected *or* boiled water to wash fruits or vegetables that are to be eaten raw.

**Hand washing:** Only boiled *or* disinfected water should be used for hand washing.

**Cooking:** Bring water to a rolling boil for 1 minute before adding food.

**Infants:** For infants use only prepared canned baby formula that is not condensed and does not required added water. *Do not* use powdered formulas prepared with contaminated water.

**Houseplants and garden:** Water can be used without treatment for watering household plants and garden plants. The exception would be things like strawberries or tomatoes where the water would contact the edible fruit.

**House pets:** The same precautions that are taken to protect humans should be applied to pets. Aquatic organisms (e.g. fish) should not be exposed to water containing elevated levels of bacteria. If the organism's water needs to be refreshed use appropriately boiled or bottled water.